SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please delete page 4, lines 5 through 21 as follows:

~~Starting from the preamble of claim 1, the objects are achieved, in accordance with the invention with the features given in the characterizing clause of claim 1. Furthermore, the objects are achieved starting from the preamble of claim 7 with the features given in the characterizing part of claim 7. The objects are also attained starting from the preamble of claim 8 according to the invention with the features given in the characterizing part of claim 8. The objects are also achieved starting with the preamble of claim 9 with the features given in the characterizing part of claim 9. The objects are also achieved starting with the preamble of claim 14, in accordance with the invention, with the features given in the characterizing part of claim 14. Starting with the preamble of claim 20, the objects are also achieved according to the invention by the features given in the characterizing part of claim 20. Furthermore, the objects are attained according to the invention starting from the preamble of claim 21 by the features of the characterizing part of claim 21.~~

Please replace page 4, lines 5 through 21 with the following:

The objects of the invention are achieved by providing A nucleic acid which is replicatable in a microorganism of the family Corynebacterium and optionally a recombinant nucleic acid, characterized in that it has a nucleotide sequence coding for L-serine dehydratase which is partially or completely mutated or expressed to a lesser degree than the naturally occurring nucleotide sequence or which is not expressed at all.

The objects of the invention are achieved by further providing a gene structure containing at least one nucleotide sequence as described above having regulatory sequences operatively linked therewith.

The objects of the invention are achieved by further providing a vector containing at least one nucleotide sequence as described above or a gene structure as described above and additional nucleotide sequences for selection, for replication in the host cell or for integration in the host cell genome.

The objects of the invention are achieved by further providing L-serine dehydratase with reduced L-serine dehydratase activity coded with a nucleotide sequence as described above.

The objects of the invention are achieved by further providing a microorganism having a nucleotide sequence which codes for an L-serine dehydratase, which is deleted in whole or in part or is mutated or is expressed to a reduced extent by comparison

with the naturally occurring nucleotide sequence or is not expressed at all.

The objects of the invention are achieved by further providing a probe for identifying genes for coding which participate in the biosynthesis of L-serine and that are produced starting with nucleic acids as described above and that contain a suitable marker for detection.

The objects of the invention are achieved by providing a method for the microbial production of L-serine which comprises the steps of:

(a) a genetically altered microorganism is produced in which the nucleic acid in the microorganism coding for the L-serine dehydratase as described above is partially or completely deleted or mutated or expressed to a reduced extent by comparison with the naturally occurring nucleic acid or is not expressed at all,

(b) this genetically altered microorganism from step (a) is used for microbial production, and

(c) the L-serine formed is isolated from the culture medium.